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Mrs. Arvilla J. Ellis

Too often the ones who have ably assisted in carrying forward an important project are soon forgotten in the expressions of congratulation given to the man who leads the project. When the annals of botany are estimated with a just hand, the wives of botanists who have silently sacrificed in order that the husband's work could be more successfully carried to the end, will receive their due reward. The instances are not infrequent, moreover, where silent sacrifice has been supplemented by material aid from the same sources. To one of these this page is inscribed. Arvilla J. Bacon, daughter of Timothy and Mary S. Bacon, was born at Potsdam, New York, February 8, 1831, was married to Job Bicknell Ellis at the same place in 1856, and died at Newfield, New Jersey, July 18, 1899. With her husband she removed to Newfield, New Jersey, in 1865, and in addition to assisting to build the home, and caring for the household in sickness and in health, she took in various kinds of work to assist in the family support. In this country of poorly supported botanical workers, such is the too common lot of the wives of working botanists. But she did more than this. Besides binding many of her husband's books and pamphlets, she prepared some three thousand blank books in which the North American Fungi were issued and in which the greater part of the Ellis collection was mounted. Besides this she arranged at least three fourths of the 200,000 specimens which were issued in this series and in the Fungi Columbiani, folding papers, inserting specimens, pasting labels and inserting in their places. In the language of one who knew her best, the quiet spirit always acted on the principle, "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do with thy might." It may justly be said that to her extended labor, none the less important and necessary because it was all what has so justly been characterized as "dead work," no less than to that of Mr. Ellis are American mycological students indebted for the valuable and extended issues of exsiccata that for the past twenty years have issued from this quiet house.

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